

Hate / Extremist Groups

The policies on hate and extremist groups are covered in DoD Directive 1325.6, AFI 51-903, and Msg 051454Z May 95. Many of the following rules apply not just to active duty Air Force personnel, but may also apply to DAF civilians, AF reservists, AFROTC and USAFA cadets. Contact legal, EEO, and/or MEO for guidance. Air Force members are prohibited from actively participating in the following types of organizations:

(AFI 51-903, 5.1.)

- Those supporting supremacist causes or advocating illegal discrimination, based on race, color, religion, sex, creed, national origin, or ethnic group.
- Those advocating the use of force or violence, or otherwise engaging in efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.

Active participation includes publicly demonstrating or rallying, fund raising, recruiting, and training members, organizing, or leading. Military members are prohibited from participation in demonstrations when they are on-duty, when in a foreign country, when in uniform, when their activities constitute a breach of law and order, or when violence is likely to occur.

Mere membership is not prohibited, however, you must consider membership by Air Force members in these groups in evaluating or assigning them. In other words, membership in these groups may be held against an individual when considering them for command, positions of greater authority, and any other assignment. Additionally, comments in performance reports are appropriate.

Commanders have inherent authority and responsibility to take action to ensure the mission is performed and to maintain good order and discipline. This includes the responsibility to place lawful restrictions on dissident and protest (hate/supremacist) activities.

Commanders must also protect the service member's right of expression, consistent with the need for good order, discipline and national security. The right of expression includes, but is not limited to, such things as possession and distribution of printed material, carrying or displaying material, wearing tattoos, etc.

Balancing these often conflicting interests is difficult, but required. Contact legal for up-to-date guidance. Some factors to consider are: whether or not the act(s), conduct, material, etc., present a clear danger to the loyalty, discipline, or morale of members of the Armed Forces; and, whether the act(s), material, etc., interferes with or has the potential to interfere with mission accomplishment.